

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-15

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 6160

E.O. 12065: GDS 12/19/84 (LIPPE, STUART) OR-P

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJ: ELECTORAL PROCESS: LIBERAL PARTY CONVENTION INCLUDES
THREAT OF POSSIBLE ELECTION BOYCOTT

REF: (A) TEGUCIGALPA 6139, (B) TEGUCIGALPA A-52, (C) TEGU-
CIGALPA 5761

1. (C) SUMMARY: AS EXPECTED, MODESTO RODAS DOMINATED THE YEAR-END LIBERAL PARTY (PLH) CONVENTION WHICH ELECTED NEW AUTHORITIES. HE WOULD HAVE DONE SO EVEN HAD THE ALIPO FACTION NOT STAYED AWAY. THE LIBERALS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE PUBLIC FORUM OFFERED BY THE CONVENTION TO ARTICULATE PARTY CONCERNS OVER THE POTENTIAL FOR ELECTORAL MANIPULATION AND APPROVED A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING NON-PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTIONS IF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE DETERMINED OBVIOUS FRAUD EXISTED. HOWEVER, THE PLH DID NOT OPT OUT OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND BEFORE TAKING SUCH A STEP WOULD HAVE TO ESTABLISH THE CREDIBILITY OF ITS CHARGES. THE CONCERNS ARE REAL ENOUGH, BUT WITH EIGHT MONTHS TO GO IN THE VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS, THE CHARGES ARE ALSO PART OF THE MANEUVERING THAT CAN BE EXPECTED IN THE DEVELOPING CONTEST. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE LIBERAL PARTY (PLH) MET DECEMBER 16-17 TO ELECT NEW NATIONAL AUTHORITIES AS REQUIRED BY THE ELECTORAL LAW. MODESTO RODAS HAD NO DIFFICULTY DOMINATING THE CONVENTION, ALTHOUGH UN-
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LIKE RICARDO ZUNIGA, HIS NATIONAL PARTY COUNTERPART (REF A), RODAS PREFERRED NOT TO TAKE A PARTY OFFICE.

3. (U) THE PLH ALSO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE PUBLIC FORUM OFFERED BY THE CONVENTION TO AIR CONCERNS OVER THE POTENTIAL FOR ELECTORAL MANIPULATION. IN ITS STATEMENTS THE PLH CHARGED SOME MILITARY OFFICERS AND NATIONAL PARTY APPOINTEES OF THE GOVERN-

MENT WITH PLACING OBSTACLES IN THE REGISTRATION OF LIBERALS. THE PLH AUTHORIZED THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO REFRAIN FROM PRESENTING CANDIDATES FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IF IT BELIEVES THE SITUATION WARRENTS. RODAS, IN HIS SPEECH, STATED THE PLH "WILL NOT LEND OURSELVES TO A MASQUERADE." THE CONVENTION ALSO CALLED FOR A "NATIONAL DIALOGUE" OF WORKERS, STUDENTS, BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES.

4. (U) SPEAKING TO THE CONVENTION, RAMON VILLEDA BERMUDEZ, SON OF FORMER PRESIDENT VILLEDA MORALES AND A NON-ALIGNED LIBERAL, DEPLORED THE ABSENCE OF THE ALIPO GROUP. ALIPO LEADERS STAYED AWAY IN SPITE OF WINNING 3 OF 283 MUNICIPALITIES AND HAVING 33 DELEGATES (OUT OF NEARLY 300). ALIPO HAD CONTESTED 44 MUNICIPALITIES. SOME DELEGATES SHOWED UP OF THEIR OWN ACCORD, BUT THE PARTY UNITY GAINED ONLY A FEW MONTHS AGO HAS TURNED OUT TO BE VERY FRAGILE. VILLEDA ALSO CRITICIZED GOVERNMENT FAVORITISM BUT NOTED "THE LIBERAL PARTY IS USED TO OVERCOMING EVEN WORSE ABUSES THAN THESE", AND ADDED "I AM SURE THIS CONDUCT DOES NOT REFLECT THE MAJORITY SENTIMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES; WE CANNOT DOUBT THE WORD OF HONOR OF GENERAL POLICARPO PAZ, NO THE PROMISES MADE NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY BY THE ARMED FORCES..."

5. (U) REFERRING TO THE THREAT OF NON-PARTICIPATION, NATIONAL PARTY LEADER ARIO RIVERA LOPEZ SAID RODAS WAS "NOT AFRAID OF FRAUD, HE IS TERRIFIED AT LOSING" THE ELECTIONS AND PREDICTED THE PNH WOULD WIN OPEN, HONEST ELECTIONS.
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6. (U) ELECTED TO THE PLH CENTRAL COMMITTEE WERE:

ROBERTO SUAZO CORDOBA - PRESIDENT
JUAN FERNANDO LOPEZ - SECRETARY GENERAL
EFRAIN BU GIRON - YOUTH, WORKER AND CAMPESINO AFFAIRS
CELEO ARIAS MONCADO - TREASURER
MARCO ANTONIO SOSA - ORGANIZATION AND PROPAGANDA
EDNA K. DE ALFONSO - WOMEN'S AFFAIRS
JOSE AZCONA - POLITICAL TRAINING

ALL WERE MEMBERS OF THE OUTGOING CENTRAL COMMITTEE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF BU GIRON WHO REPLACES UBODORO ARRIAGA.

7. (C) COMMENT: THE PLH HAS NOT OPTED OUT OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, BUT DID TAKE THE OCCASION TO SOUND A WARNING OVER ITS INCREASING CONCERN. THOSE CONCERNS HAVE PROBABLY BEEN HEIGHTENED BY NATIONAL PARTY EFFORTS TO BLOCK CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDCH) REGISTRATION (REF C), THE OUTCOME OF WHICH IS STILL NOT CLEAR. PLH CONCERNS HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED BEFORE (REF B), BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THE PARTY HAS SAID IT MIGHT BOYCOTT THE PROCESS. THE THREAT IS PART OF THE POLITICAL MANEUVERING TO BE EX-

PECTED AS EACH PARTY DEVELOPS ITS STRATEGY. IT MAY ALSO BE AN
ATTEMPT TO WARN RICARDO ZUNIGA THAT THE PLH EXPECTS TO PARTICI-
PATE OR IT WILL ATTEMPT TO DENY CREDIBILITY TO THE ELECTIONS.
NEVERTHELESS, IT IS ALSO AN INDICATION OF GROWING PLH WORRY. HOW-
EVER, BEFORE CARRYING OUT ITS THREAT, THE PLH WOULD HAVE TO
EXTABLISH THAT IT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO REGISTER ITS VOTERS IN A
REGISTRATION PROCESS THAT HAS ANOTHER EIGHT MONTHS TO GO.
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